



**Testimony of Stephen J. Pasierb, President and CEO
The Partnership for a Drug-Free America®**

**Hearing on the Reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy
House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy & Human Resources**

**The Honorable Mark E. Souder, Chairman
The Honorable Elijah Cummings, Ranking Member**

United States House of Representatives, June 15, 2005

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cummings, members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on the reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. I am Steve Pasierb, president and CEO of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.®

Before I offer my testimony today, I want to take this opportunity to thank the subcommittee – and especially you, Mr. Chairman and you, Mr. Cummings – for your leadership on the drug issue. Year after year you remain steadfast in your dedication to help the country contend with the issue of substance abuse. I have no doubt that your leadership and perseverance have contributed to the progress we have made in the last seven years in reducing the number of teenagers who use illicit drugs. All of us who work in prevention, law enforcement and treatment are exceptionally grateful for the work of this subcommittee, and especially to both of you, for your unwavering commitment to this critical issue.

Overview

My testimony today will focus on the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign (NYADMC, or “the Campaign”) as a component of the over-all reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy; on the Campaign’s effectiveness of reducing demand for illicit drugs; and the country’s ongoing need for such a program. The Partnership fully supports reauthorization of the NYADMC.

Nearly eight years ago, after careful analysis and deliberation, Congress created this innovative program to take advantage of the enormous influence of mass media in a new,

comprehensive effort designed to reduce demand for illicit drugs among children. The Campaign was designed to combine the expertise of the private sector and advertising industry with the resources of the federal government to guarantee that America's teenagers and parents would receive consistent messages about the dangers and the lure of illicit drugs.

The Media Campaign allocates the majority of its funding to the purchase of advertising time and space. Included in the Campaign's mandate is the requirement that media companies which are paid to run campaign ads are required to donate an equal amount of advertising time or space to the NYADMC. This unprecedented public/private marketing effort – the largest ever undertaken in the United States – leverages outstanding value for U.S. taxpayers.

This media-based education effort is a crucial component of America's demand reduction strategy for illicit drugs. Since the Media Campaign started producing anti-drug advertising, leading national studies that track teen drug use in America have all noted substantial declines in use. The 2004 Monitoring the Future Survey showed that over the past three years alone there has been a 17 percent decrease in teenage drug use. That translates into 600,000 fewer teens using drugs than there were in 2001. It is important to note that the National Youth Anti Drug Media Campaign was the single largest drug prevention effort in the marketplace during this time. What's more, research indicates that teenagers who see or hear anti-drug ads at least once a day have stronger anti-drug attitudes than their peers.

We know anti-drug advertising – when grounded in research, when executed creatively for target audiences, when tested for maximum impact and when delivered at appropriate levels of media exposure – can and does work. A growing body of independent research documents this fact, as do in-market case studies from around the country. The Media Campaign can influence decision-making among teenagers, and it can contribute to driving drug use downward.

The Partnership stands ready to deliver the core creative needs for the Campaign with an absolute dedication to producing the highest quality work. Our entire organization and leadership remain committed to working with Director Walters and the Office of National Drug Control Policy for the good of this country's youth.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America

The Partnership is a non-profit coalition of volunteers from the communications industry. Using a national drug-education advertising campaign and other forms of media communication, the Partnership exists to reduce illicit drug use in America.

The organization began in 1986 with seed money provided by the American Association of Advertising Agencies. The Partnership, which receives major funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and support from more than 200 corporations and companies, is strictly non-partisan and accepts no funding from manufacturers of alcohol and/or

tobacco products. All actors in the Partnership's ads appear pro bono through the generosity of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

National research suggests that the Partnership's national advertising campaign – the largest public service campaign in the history of advertising – has played a contributing role in reducing overall drug use in America. Independent studies and expert interpretation of drug trends support its contributions. *The New York Times* has described the Partnership as “one of the most effective drug-education groups in the United States.”

In addition to its work on the national level, the Partnership's State/City Alliance Program supports the organization's mission at the local level. Working with state and city governments and locally-based drug prevention organizations, the Partnership provides – at no cost – the guidance, on-site technical assistance and creative materials necessary to shape anti-substance abuse media campaigns tailored to the needs and activities of any given state or city.

The Partnership also participates in the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, coordinated by ONDCP. At the core of this multi-faceted initiative is a paid advertising program, featuring messages created by the Partnership.

Today, the Partnership is run by a professional staff of 50. Partnership campaigns have received every major award in the advertising and marketing industries for creative excellence and effectiveness, including the American Marketing Association's highest honor for marketing effectiveness.

The Partnership's Role in the Media Campaign

Since 1998, the Partnership has served as the primary creative partner to ONDCP on the Media Campaign. As you will recall, Congress authorized the Media Campaign knowing that the private sector, working through the Partnership, agreed to contribute its expertise in advertising and marketing to this first-of-its-kind effort. I am pleased to report that the private sector has met this commitment with great enthusiasm. To date, the private sector, through the Partnership, has contributed approximately \$125 million in advertising campaigns and services to the Media Campaign. And the good news is that commitment remains strong. Advertising agencies, through the Partnership, are lined up and ready to produce effective communications campaigns for this effort.

As the primary creative partner on the Media Campaign, the Partnership provides:

- Access to a wide variety of talent in the advertising industry, via our network of volunteer advertising agencies: Agencies working for the Partnership that create campaigns for the Media Campaign donate all creative services. This includes the billable time and talent of account managers, planning and creative teams, producers, broadcast managers, print and sound producers and many others. The Partnership's roots in the advertising industry, and the Partnership's reputation for

creative excellence, are driving forces behind the breadth and depth of pro bono support we have been able to generate for the Media Campaign.

- Critical input from senior creative directors who comprise the Partnership's Creative Review Committee: This committee, comprised of leading creative directors in the advertising industry, reviews and approves all Partnership advertising. The committee ensures that advertising produced for the Partnership is on strategy and is consistently the best work the industry has to offer. Having this caliber of creative talent available to critique our work is unique in our industry, and something simply not afforded to commercial clients.
- Waivers from talent unions: The Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) have been long-time supporters of the Partnership and its mission. As such, these talent unions offer the Partnership an exclusive waiver on fees due to its members who appear in our advertising. Two types of fees – "talent" and "reuse" fees are waived. Because the Partnership is a primary partner in the NYADMC, these savings are passed along to the Media Campaign.
- Organization-wide support services: The Partnership's Creative Development Group is dedicated to fulfilling the creative needs of the Media Campaign. The group works with ONDCP staff, ONDCP's contractors and Partnership advertising agencies to coordinate workflow. Additionally, the Partnership's Research Group supports ONDCP staff on various projects that support the NYADMC. The requirements of servicing the NYADMC touch virtually every corner of the Partnership's staff in New York. To date, the Partnership has invested millions of dollars in the Media Campaign, all from private donations to the Partnership, to service the campaign.

The Partnership is also relied upon for strategic insights on the Media Campaign, based on our understanding of adolescent attitudes toward drug use, and our almost 20 years of experience in crafting effective anti-drug messages aimed at teens and their parents. The Partnership conducts one of the largest, on-going studies on drug-related attitudes in the country. The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, in place since 1986, offers unique insights into the challenge of communicating effectively with teenagers about illicit drugs. With almost two decades experience running national advertising campaigns on drugs, the Partnership is able to share the organization's knowledge and experience with ONDCP and its contractors to benefit the Media Campaign.

Campaign Effectiveness

The case for reauthorizing the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is rather straightforward: anti-drug advertising works. This is documented in independent research, as well as in our own national tracking study, now in its 17th year.

A study published in the August 2002 *American Journal of Public Health* found anti-drug advertising is associated with a reduced probability of marijuana and cocaine/crack use among adolescents. A team including researchers from Yale University, New York University, the London Business School and Baruch College evaluated the effectiveness of drug-education messages from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America from 1987 through 1990. The researchers said that by 1990, “after three years of Partnership ads, approximately 9.25 percent fewer adolescents were using marijuana.” The team also noted the decrease came at a time when anti-drug ads had increasing levels of media financial support - and thus were seen more often. “Given the results,” the researchers said, “this increase appears to have been a worthwhile investment.”

Previously, the February 2001 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* reported television advertising contributed to a significant decline in marijuana use among teenagers. Research funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) chronicled the impact of anti-drug TV ads on teens described as “sensation seekers” – adolescents attracted to risky activity and behavior. Conducted by Dr. Philip Palmgreen and a team of researchers at the University of Kentucky, the study tracked the impact of ad campaigns in select counties in Kentucky. The study showed a 26.7 decline in marijuana use among sensation-seeking teens exposed to anti-drug ads over a two-year period. Most ads used in the study were created by the Partnership for the Media Campaign.

National tracking data also support the effectiveness of anti-drug ads. Dr. Lloyd Johnston, lead researcher for the University of Michigan’s Monitoring the Future study, said MTF research showed that:

“Over the past two years, there has been an increase in the proportion of students seeing marijuana use as dangerous; this change in beliefs may well explain some of the recent gradual decline in use. Quite possibly, the Media Campaign aimed at marijuana use, that has been undertaken by the White House Office of Drug Control Policy in collaboration with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, has been having its intended effect. I am not aware of any other social influence process that could explain these changes in how young people view marijuana.”

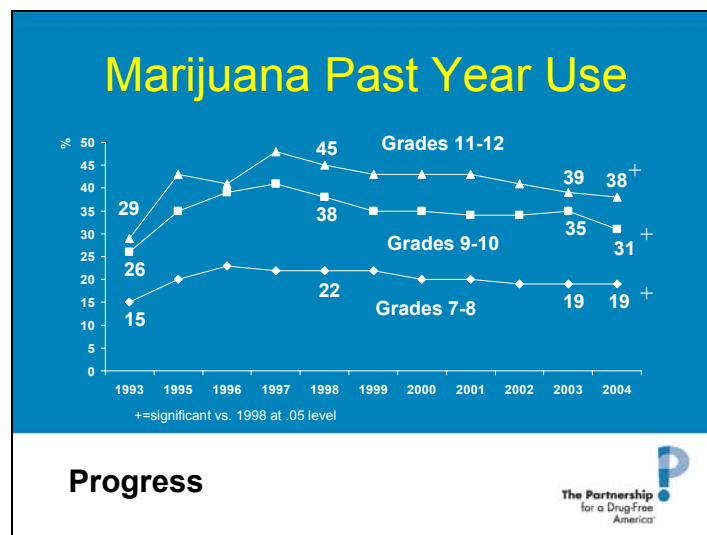
Johnston also remarked of the Partnership’s early efforts to combat inhalant abuse: “The use of inhalants began to turn downward in 1996, following the launching of an ad campaign by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, and has been gradually and steadily declining since then.”

Dr. Johnston has also said the survey consistently finds a very high degree of recalled exposure to Partnership ads, that the ads have high credibility with the audience and that they have high-judged impact on the behavior of that audience.

The effectiveness of anti-drug advertising is also underscored in findings from the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study: Year after year, tracking data show that teenagers who are exposed to anti-drug advertising frequently have stronger anti-drug attitudes and are considerably less likely to use drugs than teens who see and hear these messages infrequently.

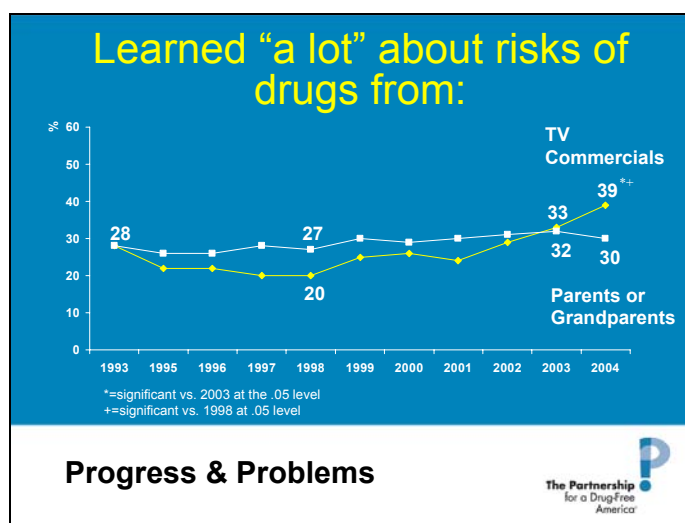
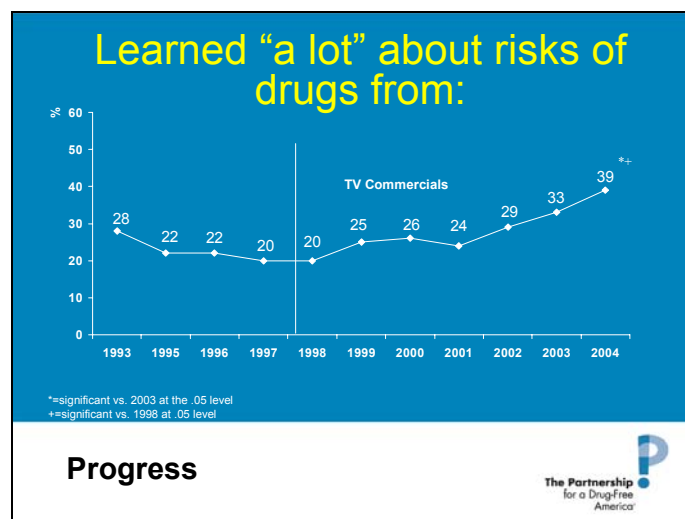
Allow me to offer evidence of the effectiveness of the Media Campaign, in the following points. The data cited below are drawn from the 2004 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATs). Last year, we sampled over 7,300 teenagers, in grades 7 through 12, across the country; we also over-sampled for African- and Hispanic-Americans to ensure accurate representations of these constituents. Our findings in PATs track consistently with those of the Monitoring the Future study, conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research under grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

- Significantly fewer teenagers are using marijuana today when compared to 1998, the year the Media Campaign launched. Reductions are evident in all measured categories of prevalence – lifetime, past year and past month use. As you surely know, the Media Campaign focuses heavily on preventing adolescent use of marijuana – the most widely abused of all illicit substances.



- Marijuana-related attitudes among teenagers have improved significantly over the same time. In the past year, teen perception that marijuana use carries ‘great risk’ of getting in trouble with the law and dropping out of school increased significantly. Looking at risks by category, or type of risk, relational risks such as upsetting their parents, losing their friends or not being able to get a girlfriend or boyfriend are all significantly greater than in 1998.
- Teens are less likely to report that their close friends use marijuana. This is important because teens whose friends use drugs are more likely to use drugs themselves.

- In 2004 there was a significant increase in reports that anti-drug commercials encouraged teens to talk to someone else about the risks of drugs. Overall, teens are more likely to rate anti-drug messages as efficacious – i.e. that the ads made them more aware of the risks, gave them new information, made them less likely to use – than they were in 1998.
- The number of teenagers reporting learning a lot about the risks of drugs from television commercials has increased steadily since the launch of the Media Campaign in 1998. This demonstrates the importance of the Media Campaign's buying power and ability to deliver these research-based messages to large portions of our target audiences consistently over time. In fact, the data report this year for the first time that teens are more likely to cite television commercials as a key source for anti-drug information than any other source – including, unfortunately, their parents.



Partnership Support for H.R. 2829 to Reauthorize the NYADMC

We want you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cummings and distinguished members of the subcommittee, to know that we support this legislation and remain committed to servicing the media campaign and reducing drug use in this country.

First and foremost, thank you for all the hard work put into crafting H.R. 2829, especially those provisions that address reauthorization of the Media Campaign. This is a superb bill, one that emphasizes accountability, clarifies roles and responsibilities of campaign participants, and correctly identifies the Director of ONDCP as the single person responsible for major decisions about the strategic direction of the Media Campaign. The language offers flexibility to Campaign coordinators, while ensuring the Campaign remains focused and accountable for its outcomes. This bill reflects the valuable experience the campaign has gained over the past several years, and builds on those experiences to offer clear direction for the future. We are most appreciative that the legislation reaffirms that private sector participation, through the Partnership, remains central to the Campaign, as the original authorizers set forth when they designed and approved this important program.

One area where we wish to express concern is the requirement that 82 percent of appropriated funds be allocated exclusively for the purchase of advertising time and space at the \$120 million appropriation level. We understand the committee's intent to emphasize the importance of message delivery, yet some spending requirements potentially constrain the campaign. In particular: limiting the campaign's ability to thoroughly test all new ads; providing for the production of sufficient ads necessary to keep the campaign fresh and prevent wear-out; limiting the ability to create special campaigns serving the needs of minority and ethnic populations; and, developing web content and banner advertising for the Internet. Given the campaign's current funding level of \$120 million, we would suggest a broader definition of expenditures under the 82% ceiling that would include all advertising services required to ensure these vital campaign components are not compromised. These elements are essential to the effectiveness of the messages and content placed into the Media Campaign's time and space. Net, the 82 percent requirement at the \$120 million appropriation level will constrain our ability to insure the Campaign has a sufficient number of ads produced, tested and available to run.

We support this legislation and thank you and the committee staff for your hard work and dedication.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, we consider the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign an essential component of the country's efforts to reduce demand for illegal drugs.

We will not find a more efficient way to educate teenagers about the dangers of drugs than through the power, influence and reach of mass media. The Media Campaign is

exceptionally efficient, costing approximately \$6 per year, per teen to execute. We could spend federal resources in countless ways to educate teenagers about the dangers of drugs, and many of these are surely worthy and effective methods. We will not, however, find a more efficient and effective way to do so than through mass media.

The process of changing social attitudes and behavior is often a slow, measured one. It requires patience and persistence because right behind the current generation of kids is another who will need to learn about the risks of marijuana and Ecstasy, methamphetamine and heroin, cocaine and crack, and whatever new drugs come our way. We, as a country, have a responsibility to offer these kids a solid education about drugs before they learn about these substances on their own.

The Media Campaign is an important voice consistently educating teens and their parents about the truth about drugs. It's a meaningful voice and a reliable voice, one that parents and children have grown to trust. We cannot risk silencing this Campaign at such a critical time.